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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - KYRGYZSTAN REVOLUTION - U.S.
- RUSSIAN INFLUENCE AFGHANISTAN - TALIBAN REGIME
PARIS - TUESDAY, MARCH 29, 2005

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

- [1](#)1. KYRGYZSTAN REVOLUTION - U.S. - RUSSIAN INFLUENCE
- [1](#)2. AFGHANISTAN - TALIBAN REGIME

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

DOMESTIC POLITICS DOMINATE TODAY'S FRONT PAGES AND COMMENTARIES, WITH RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO LEADING WITH THE RESULTS OF ITS LATEST IPSOS-EUROPE ONE POLL ON THE EUROPEAN CONSTITUTION. THE RESULTS SHOW THAT 54 PERCENT OF THE FRENCH WOULD VOTE 'NO' TO THE CONSTITUTION; 46 PERCENT ARE SAID TO VOTE IN FAVOR. THE POLL ALSO SHOWS THAT A MAJORITY OF SOCIALISTS (53%) WILL VOTE 'NO.' THE FIGARO COMMENTS: "IN THE PAST TEN DAYS THIS IS THE FOURTH CONSECUTIVE POLL SHOWING A VICTORY OF THE 'NO.'"

POLITICAL CHANGE IN KYRGYSZTAN IS ALSO DEBATED. IN LE FIGARO, GERARD CHALIAND, A SPECIALIST IN GEO-STRATEGY WHO HAS RECENTLY PENNED A BOOK ENTITLED "FROM ONE IRAQ WAR TO THE NEXT," COMMENTS ON THE CHANGES IN RUSSIA'S PERIPHERY, AND ALSO ON U.S. INFLUENCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. (SEE PART C)

LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION DEVOTES A TWO-PAGE REPORT TO THE "END OF THE TALEBAN." IN HIS EDITORIAL, PATRICK SABATIER WARNS AGAINST CRYING VICTORY IN AFGHANISTAN TOO SOON. AS PART OF THE SAME REPORT, OLIVIER ROY, AN EXPERT ON THE MIDDLE EAST, COMMENTS ON THE "SUCCESS OF HAMID KARZAI. HE MANAGED THINGS WELL AND THE AMERICANS ACTED WITH MORE TALENT IN AFGHANISTAN THAN IN IRAQ." (SEE PART C)

RIGHT-OF-CENTER WEEKLY L'EXPRESS CARRIES A REPORT ON TWO OF PRESIDENT BUSH'S NOMINATIONS, BOLTON AND WOLFOWITZ. PHILIPPE COSTE WRITES: "ARE THESE TWO UNILATERALIST HAWKS THE INSTRUMENTS OF AN AMERICAN PLOT AGAINST INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS? NOT SO FAST! BOTH MEN WILL DO WELL. BOLTON, WHO CANNOT BE ACCUSED OF COMPLACENCY TOWARDS THE UN. COULD WELL HELP TO IMPROVE THE INSTITUTION'S CREDIBILITY. AS FOR WOLFOWITZ, HIS EXCELLENCE AS FORMER AMBASSADOR TO INDONESIA AND HIS ATTRACTION TO NATION BUILDING LEAD US TO THINK HE WILL PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION TO GOOD GOVERNANCE AND TO THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION."

LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION BEGINS A FOUR-PART CARTOON ON IRAQ BY JOE SACCO, COMMISSIONED BY THE GUARDIAN, WHILE SACCO WAS EMBEDDED WITH A U.S. MARINE DETACHMENT. SACCO IS INTERVIEWED ABOUT EMBEDDED JOURNALISTS: "IT IS LESS DANGEROUS WHEN IN IRAQ TO BE EMBEDDED THAN TO MOVE AROUND AMONG CIVILIANS. BUT WHEN YOU ARE WITH THE MARINES, YOU BEGIN TO SHARE THEIR PARANOIA AND THEIR FEAR. I WANTED TO SHOW THAT, FROM THEIR POINT OF VIEW, ANYONE CAN BECOME A POTENTIAL THREAT, AND OF COURSE THIS IS NOT THE BEST WAY TO WIN OVER HEARTS. IT JUST DOES NOT WORK. AS AN EMBED, A JOURNALIST LOSES HIS DISTANCE. EMBEDDING JOURNALISTS IS NOT A GOOD THING. YOU BECOME TOO CLOSE TO THE SOLDIERS. JOURNALISTS MUST THEN ATTEMPT TO SEPARATE THEIR FEELINGS FROM THEIR PERCEPTION OF REALITY."

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

KYRGYZSTAN REVOLUTION - U.S. - RUSSIAN INFLUENCE

"RUSSIA'S LOSS OF INFLUENCE"

GERARD CHALIAND IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (03/29): "FOR YEARS NOW WASHINGTON HAS BEEN HELPING IN THE ROLLBACK OF RUSSIA'S INFLUENCE IN COUNTRIES FROM THE WARSAW PACT. THREE BALTIC NATIONS HAVE BECOME NATO AND EU MEMBERS. NATO HAS BECOME, IN ADDITION TO A MILITARY PACT, A DIPLOMATIC INSTRUMENT. AMERICA'S POPULARITY IN THESE NATIONS CLOSE TO RUSSIA IS CONSIDERABLE. THIS IS NOT THE CASE, EXCEPT FOR A FEW EXCEPTIONS, IN PUBLIC OPINION IN THE MIDDLE EAST. ONE MIGHT EVEN SAY THAT IN THE GREATER MIDDLE EAST, THE MORE A REGIME IS PRO-AMERICAN, THE LESS THE POPULATION FAVORS THE U.S. NOTHING OF THE KIND IS HAPPENING ON RUSSIA'S DOORSTEP. EVERYTHING IS POINTING TO RUSSIA BEING UNABLE TO BE MORE THAN A REGIONAL POWER IN THE FUTURE. UNDER WASHINGTON'S INFLUENCE, AMERICA'S ALLIES ARE STICKING TOGETHER IN THAT REGION. WASHINGTON'S FOREIGN POLICY SEEMS TO HAVE GARNERED MORE SUCCESS IN RUSSIA'S

PERIPHERY THAN IN THE MIDDLE EAST. IRAQ IS A HUGE MESS, SYRIA HAS FOR A LONG TIME BEEN THE WEAK LINK AND LEBANON IS STILL A NATION WHERE RELIGIOUS GROUPS PUT THEIR PARTISAN INTERESTS ABOVE THE NATIONAL INTEREST."

AFGHANISTAN - TALIBAN REGIME

"THE TALIBAN, A SPECIES ON THE WANE"

PATRICK SABATIER IN LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION (03/29): "IF THE TALIBAN ARE TODAY A DYING SPECIES, IT IS BECAUSE PAKISTAN HAS DECIDED TO SACRIFICE THEM TO AVOID BEING CHECKMATED BY PRESIDENT BUSH. THE END OF THIS OBSCURANTIST GROUP IS GOOD NEWS. BUT THE COROLLARY IS THE SALE OF F-16 AIRCRAFT TO PAKISTAN. PRESIDENT BUSH'S ABSOLUTION OF MUSHARRAF IS A WAY OF THANKING HIM FOR HIS SUPPORT IN THE WAR AGAINST TERRORISM. BUT WE SHOULD NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE IMPORTANCE OF PAKISTAN IN THE FIGHT AGAINST NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION, JUST BECAUSE WE HAVE SUCCESSFULLY COME TO TERMS WITH AFGHANISTAN'S ISLAMIC GROUPS. NEITHER SHOULD WE CRY VICTORY TOO SOON IN AFGHANISTAN, A COUNTRY WHICH IS CONVALESCING BUT IS STILL THREATENED WITH THE GANGRENE OF DRUG TRAFFIC."

"KARZAI HAS MANAGED WELL"

OLIVIER ROY IN LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION (03/29): "PRESIDENT KARZAI HAS MANAGED PRETTY WELL AND THE AMERICANS HAVE DONE BETTER IN AFGHANISTAN THAN IN IRAQ, PARADOXICALLY, BECAUSE AFGHANISTAN DOES NOT REALLY INTEREST THEM. THEIR PRESENCE IN AFGHANISTAN HAS BEEN LESS INTRUSIVE THAN IN IRAQ. AND THEIR AMBASSADOR, WHO IS OF AFGHAN ANCESTRY, KNOWS THE COUNTRY WELL. HE KNOWS HOW TO SPEAK TO THE PEOPLE. BUT MOSTLY THE AMERICANS BROUGHT TO POWER HAMID KARZAI, WHO EMBODIES NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY. IN IRAQ, TWO YEARS AFTER THE START OF THE WAR, IRAQI SOVEREIGNTY IS NOT FULLY RESTORED." LEACH